# Meroz Cursed.

OR,

# A SERMON,

PREACHED

To the Honourable House of

# COMMONS,

At their late Solemn Fast,
*February* 23. 1641.

By Stephen Marshall, B.D.
Minister of *Finchingfield* in *Essex*.

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Psalm 122. 6, 9.

*Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*

*Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.*

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UMI

# To the Honourable Houſe of COMMONS, now Aſſembled in PARLIAMENT.

IT *is fit my obedience ſhould laſt as long as your Commands; for ſo I have alwayes interpreted your Requeſts and Deſires to be. As I never had the confidence to preſent you with any thing properly mine, ſo neither will I be guiltie of that Injuſtice, as to deny you any thing ſo truely your own, as is this fruit of my poor, yet willing, endeavours. It is yours* truely, *but moſt principally the Churches; whoſe both you, and I, and all that you can do, or I ſpeak, are. If it may be ſerviceable to you, and you by it made more ſerviceable to the Church and Cauſe of God, I have my option. But I am reſolved not to*

*make that use of my experience of your patience in hearing the Sermon, as to try it further with the length of a Dedication: Onely I think it my duty to second my proposition with my Prayers, That God would vouchsafe a blessing to your endeavours for his Church, and to you for your endeavours. These shall be the constant and earnest desires of*

*Your Servant*

Stephen Marshall.

# A SERMON

## Preached at the late Faſt before the Commons Houſe of PARLIAMENT.

JUDGES V. XXIII.

*Curſe ye Meroz (ſaid the Angel of the Lord) curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, becauſe they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty.*

RIght Honourable and beloved, it hath been a cuſtome almoſt amongſt all Nations, after any notable Victory, to have their *Epinicia*, their Triumphant Songs, wherein the illuſtrious acts of their owne worthy Leaders, and the ſhame and confuſion of their enemies were celebrated, preſerved, and ſo delivered over to poſterity. The *Romans* had their *Salii* Prieſts, who after any victory went dancing through the City, ſinging their *Hymnes* and *Pæans* to *Mars*, and the reſt of the favourable Gods. And the *Grecians*, ſometimes in *Verſes*, ſometimes by *Sculpture*, uſed to ſet forth their famous Battels and Victories, yet alwayes attributing the higheſt glory of all to their Gods, whom they ſuppoſed to be preſent with them, *Protectors* over them, and *fighters* for them. This courſe, I think, the Devill learned from the Lord *Iehovah's* dealing with his own people, who alwayes directeth them thus to celebrate his noble acts, and their great deliverances. Thus *Moſes* and *Aaron* ſang unto the Lord, when he *triumphed glorioufly over Pharaoh and all his Hoaſt, making them ſink like a ſtone to the bottome of the Red Sea.* Thus the women in their Song

Introduction ſhewing

Exod. 15.

1 Sam. 18. and Dance celebrated their victory over the *Philistims*.
The scope of the Chapter. And this whole Chapter is nothing but a *Triumphant song*, setting forth in an elegant & lofty verse, the great victory which *Barak* & *Deborah*, and a small army with them had gotten, (the Lord marching before them)
Judges 4.3. against King *Iabin* and his General *Sisera*, *who for twenty years had mightily oppressed the Children of Israel.*

In which song, First all *praise* and *glory* is given to *Iehovah* the Lord of Hosts the Prince who led them, by whose strength alone the victory was obtained. *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel. I will sing unto the Lord. Lord when thou wentest out of Seir, &c.* Then the Song descends to the *due praises* of their Generall *Barak*, and his assistant *Deborah*, yea the severall *Regiments* and Companies both of Horse and Foot doe receive the praise and reward of their courage and valour. And not only so, but the Song proceeds to *Stigmatize* and brand with reproach, and mark out for punishment all such companies, as had played either the Traytours or the Cowards, or were otherwise wanting to their duty in this great expedition. *Reuben* had other Sheep to tune, *he tarried amongst his sheepfolds to heare the bleating of his flock. Gilead* durst not crosse the water,
Verse 16. *Dan* cowardly withdrew into his ships, *Ashur* durst not come from his own coasts. God takes notice and remembers them all, and lets them know he had great thoughts of heart about it, and in time would reckon with them for it.

Especially of this verse. But above all his wrath was most incensed against *Meroz*, a people of whom we finde no mention in the whole Book of God, nor I think in any other Story, but only in this place, upon this unhappy occasion, you can know no more of them then what this place tels

tels you: and these few reliques of them, remaine as the lake of *Sodome* as a monument of their sin, or as a Mast of a Ship swallowed up in the quicksand, to warne passengers to take heed of that dangerous place; or as *Lots* Wife turned into a Pillar of Salt, to season others. This their short Chronicle I may call their Grave-stone, which seems to hold out such an inscription, as they say *Sennacheribs* Tombe had, *Look upon me, and learne to be godly.* So theirs, Look upon me, and learne your own duty. *Look upon me, and take heed of disserting the cause and Church of God, when they stand in need of you.*

A Text and Theme exceeding *seasonable.* Seasonable to the *times* wherein we live, when abundance of mighty enemies rise up against the Lord, and against his Church. *Seasonable* to the *temper* of most people who generally minde their own things, and not the things of Christ. *Seasonable* to the *occasion* of this dayes meeting, which is purposely for the helpe of the Lord, and his cause, and people now distressed in *Ireland.* But to me it seems most of all *seasonable* for this present *honourable Assembly* who all should be as the *Lord: their Horses as his Horses, their Chariots as his Chariots,* they being all called to be Leaders and Captaines of the Lords Host. The Lord make it but as *profitable,* as I am sure it is *seasonable,* and I doubt not but we shall be exceeding gainers by it. And the suitableness of it to the occasion. Psal. 2. 21.

In this Text which I may call the *doome of Meroz,* there are these two things. Division.

First, the *Author* of the doom or sentence, *the Angel of the Lord. Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord.*

Secondly, the *Sentence* given against them: *Curse ye Meroz, &c.*

Wherein likewiſe conſider theſe two things.

Firſt, What their *fault* was.

Secondly, What their *puniſhment* was.

Their *Fault* ye have in theſe words, *They came not out to the helpe of the Lord, to the helpe of the Lord againſt the mighty.*

Their *Puniſhment* was a *curſe*, and a *bitter* one: *Curſe ye Meroz, curſe ye bitterly*, or (as the word ſignifies) in curſing *curſe the inhabitants of Meroz*, continue to curſe them, vehemently curſe them, never leave curſing them.

An interpretation. I ſhall briefly interpret the words, and ſo proceed (with Gods aſſiſtance) to ſome profitable inſtructions.

Firſt, the *Angel of the Lord.* I finde great difference among Interpreters, who this *Angel* of the Lord ſhould be. Some think it was *Deborah* the Propheteſſe who penn'd this Song. Some think *Barak* the Generall was likewiſe at this time inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt. Some think it was the Angel that led them, *Michael* their Prince who went out with them. Some think the Angel of the Lord, ſignifies all that have *divine inſpiration*, but all agree in the intent of it, namely, that the Author is alledged, that all might know that this curſe came not from the *private ſpirit of Deborah* or *Barak* (as *Sauls* once did, when he curſed every one that ſhould taſte any meat untill the evening, that he might be avenged on his enemies) but was pronounced by the direction of God himſelf, and ſo conſequently, they who are thus curſed are curſed indeed, *The Angel of the Lord*, that is *divine authority.*

1 Sam. 14 24

2. *Meroz.* Who was *Meroz*, and what people were they? I could never learn whether *Meroz* were a *City* or a *Province*, few or many, rich or poor, weak or ſtrong; in this all agree that they were *Iewes*; the *Canaanites* ſhould

should not have been curſed for not joyning with *Iſrael* in their warres. All likewiſe agree, that they dwelt neer Mount *Tabor* and the River *Kiſon*, the place where this battell was fought, and ſo conſequently neer the danger: and in all probability were called by *Deborah* and *Barak* to come and aſſiſt them. Which is likewiſe judged to be the cauſe, why they had a heavier doome then any other. God cannot abide to have ſuch ill neighbours to his people when they are in diſtreſſe.

3. *Curſe them.* The word ſignifies, *Maledicere verbo, malefacere re*, to ſpeak evill of them, to revile them, to reproach them and wiſh miſchiefe to them, to do any evill againſt them, to execute in deed, what they would wiſh in words. What the particular Curſe was, or what the event of it was, no man can determine; this I finde, which is moſt probable: It was ordinarily obſerved among the Iewes, that whatſoever was juſtly curſed, grew *unfruitfull* preſently. If a *Woman* were curſed ſhe proved *barren*. If the *Earth* were curſed, it brought forth *Briars* and *Thornes*, no profitable Seed or Plants would *grow* there. If *Trees* were curſed, they *withered* away. If Gods curſe fell upon *Houſes* or *Cities*, the *walles* and *foundations* would fall down. Gods curſe alwayes waſted that upon which it fell. So in all likelihood this curſe is the cauſe we never reade more of them. If they were a *Province*, their land proved a *deſolate wilderneſſe*. If a *City*, it was *deſtroyed*, or grew *unpeopled*: this bitter curſe like the *Water of* jealouſie made an end of them. Numb. 5. 27

4. They came not to the help of the Lord againſt the *Mighty*. Who are theſe *Mighty*? Without all queſtion by the Mighty are literally meant King *Iabin*, and his Generall *Siſera*, becauſe they were thoſe po-

tent enemies, against whom the battell was fought. But in Gods intent (this being a Propheticall Song) the mighty are all, of what *ranke* or *qualitie* soever, who are eminent in *wisedome*, *strength*, *authoritie* or *riches*, and mannage an *ill cause* against the Lord or against his Church.

Lastly, they came not out to the help of the *Lord*: By the help of the *Lord* you will easily conclude, that in this particular, the help of *Deborah* and *Barak* are meant. They came not to joyn with the Tribes of *Zabulon* and *Nepthali*, and that small handfull of *Israelites* who by Gods direction undertooke this battell against the great Captaine *Sisera*. Because they joyned not their strength with Gods people, they are judged not to help the *Lord*. For (as I shall shew anon) the *Lord* and his *People* are so *conjoyned*, that their friends are his friends, and their enemies are his enemies, and whosoever helps not *them*, are interpreted to *refuse* to *assist* the *Lord himselfe*. I know nothing else in the Text that hath the least shew of difficultie.

Were this Text to bee handled at large in many Sermons, such Observations as these could not briefly be passed over: as first,

That although Gods people must (ὀλὶ τὸ πολὺ) *blesse*, *blesse* I say, and not *curse*. Curses are edged tooles, dangerous to bee medled with, yet there may fall out such cases, that Gods blessed servants must come downe from Mount *Gerizim*, the Mount of *Blessing*; and go up on Mount *Ebal*, the Mount of *Cursing*; and there *curse* and *curse bitterly*. *Curse ye Meroz, said the Angell of the Lord.*

Secondly, That although it be true that the curse causeless shall not come, yet when Gods people according

cording to Gods direction, (*clave non errante*) doe curſe, their curſe is like the *flying rule* which we read of, *it conſumes the houſe it lights upon, the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof.* It is like the Wolfes foot, of which they ſay, that no herbe upon which it hath once trod will grow afterwards. Zech. 5.3,4.

Thirdly, That the mighty doe frequently oppoſe the Lord: It is no new thing to finde the Mighty in ſtrength, the Mighty in authority, the Mighty in wealth, the Mighty in parts, in Learning, in Counſell, to engage all againſt the Lord, his Church, & Cauſe. The Lambs followers and ſervants, are often the poore and off-ſcouring of the World, when Kings, and Captaines, Merchants, and Wiſemen, being drunk with the wine of the Whores fornications, proceed to make warre with the Lamb, and to give all their ſtrength unto the Beaſt, till the words of God ſhall be fulfilled. Rev. 17.18.

Fourthly, That when the mighty of the World doe oppoſe the *Lord*, Gods *meaneſt ſervants* muſt not be afraid to oppoſe the *Mighty*.

And fifthly, That whoſoever come out to joyn their ſtrength, and to give aſſiſtance to the Lords *people*, the Lord doth interpret them all to give helpe and aſſiſtance to *himſelfe*.

But becauſe my diſcourſe upon this Text, in this place muſt be hedg'd into one Sermon, I may not let it out into ſuch a ſpacious field. I ſhall paſſe by all theſe and many other ſeaſonable truths, which in this Text are obvious to all your eyes, and betake my ſelfe to cleare one leſſon only, which you will quickly ſee to be the maine ſcope and intent, not only of this *verſe*, but of the greateſt part of this *Chapter*, and moſt ſeaſonable for theſe times, for this Aſſembly and occaſion, *viz.*

*All*

The maine Doctrine propounded. *All people are curſed or bleſſed according as they doe or doe not joyne their ſtrength and give their beſt aſſiſtance to the Lords people againſt their enemies.*

Explained. I beſeech you ſee how cleare this is, not only in this *verſe* (God laid nothing elſe to *Meroz* charge but only this, they came not out to help the Lord againſt the mighty) but in other paſſages of this *Chapter*. *My heart is toward the Governours of Iſrael, that offered themſelves willingly among the people. Hallelujah, Praiſe the Lord.* They are not ſo much as named without an *Euge*. The *Princes* of *Iſſachar* are *bleſſed* for being with *Barak*. *Zebulun and Nepthali were a people that jeoparded their lives to the death in the high places of the field.* Theſe are bleſſed alſo. *Bleſſed above women was Iael the wife of Heber the Kenite.* What made *Iael* ſuch a *bleſſed woman*? Even this, *ſhe put her hand to the naile, and her right hand to the workmans hammer, and with the hammer ſhe ſmote Siſera, ſhe ſmote off his head, when ſhe had pierced and ſmitten thorow his Temples.* On the other ſide ſee the *diſpleaſure* that there is againſt the Tribes who came not out to help in this *expedition*. *Ruben* had buſineſſe of his owne, his flocks were to be attended. *Gilead* could plead that the River *Iordan* divided him, from *Barak* and his company: *Aſher* had his owne breaches to make up, and the Sea coaſts to looke to. A man might think, theſe were faire *excuſes*. But God had *great thoughts of heart againſt them all.* And woe to him or them, againſt whom *God* hath *great thoughts*. The whole Chapter runs in this ſtraine, they are cryed up, they are honoured and *bleſſed*: not only the *heart* of *Gods people*, but the ſoule of God himſelfe (as I may ſay) tooke pleaſure in them, who appeared on the Churches ſide; his *diſpleaſure, indignation, wrath* and *curſe* did riſe againſt all, who came not to the helpe.

And proved v.9. v.15. v.18. v.24.

This

This is moſt plaine in many other Scriptures. I ſhall cull out but three among three hundred, *Ier* 48. 10. That whole Chapter containes the *doome of Moab*, Gods curſe was now to be executed upon *Moab*, and you may read of *Moab*, that the Lord once ſent to him when his people were in diſtreſſe. *Let my outcaſts dwell with thee Moab, be thou a ſhelter to them in the time of a ſtorme.* But *Moab was too proud* to liſten to Gods counſell. *Moab* was alwaies an ill enemy to *Iſrael*. Now God comes to reckon with him for it. Now the ſpoyler ſhall come upon all his Cities, and to *them* who were to *execute* this vengeance of God againſt them. Marke what a *charge* is given in the tenth verſe, *Curſed is he that doth the worke of the Lord negligently*, or fraudently, or deceitfully, as the word ſignifies; Now what was the worke which was to be done? the next words will tell you, *Curſed is every one that withholds his hand from ſhedding of blood*: the ſtrangeſt reaſon of a curſe that ever was read of; if ever a man might have pleaded (with *Peter* when the voice ſaid unto him, *Ariſe Peter kill and eate*) *not ſo Lord*, I have not beene accuſtomed to this, here were roome for ſuch a *plea*, when his worke was to goe and *embrew* his hands in the *blood of men*, to ſpill and *powre* out the *blood* of *women* and *children, like water* in every ſtreet. But he is a *curſed man that withholds his hand from this*, or that ſhall do it *fraudulently*, that is, if he do it as *Saul* did againſt the *Amalekites*, kill ſome and ſave ſome, if he goe not through with the worke, he is a curſed man, when this is to be done upon *Moab* the *enemy of Gods Church*. So that *whatſoever employment* men are put to, they are curſed men, that take not part with God in his worke. Another place you ſhall find in *Pſal.* 137. *v.* 8. 9. The daughter of *Babylon*

as they help or help not the Church of God.

Iſay 16. v. 3.

Men are curſed or bleſſed

was there to be deſtroyed, obſerve now the epithete which God gives to the *executioners* of his *wrath* againſt *Babylon*. *Bleſſed is the man that rewardeth thee, as thou haſt ſerved us. Bleſſed is the man that makes Babylon drinke the ſame cup, which Babylon had made Gods people to drinke.* Now he that reades the booke of the Lamentations, may finde how *Babylon* had uſed the Church of God, they had *broken* their *bones* as a *Lion* breakes the bones of a Lamb, brought their *necks* under *perſecution*, made their *skin blacke like an oven, hang'd up their Princes by the hand*, and which is moſt of all cruell, had *daſhed their children againſt the ſtones*. Now ſaith the Spirit of God, *Bleſſed is the man that thus rewards Babylon*, yea, *bleſſed is the man that takes their little ones and daſhes them againſt the ſtones*. What *Souldiers heart* would not ſtart at this, not only when he is in *hot blood* to cut downe *armed* enemies in the *field*, but afterward *deliberately* to come into a ſubdued *City*, and take the *litte ones* upon the *ſpeares point*, to take them by the heeles and *beat* out their *braines againſt the walles*, what inhumanitie and barbarouſneſſe would this be thought? Yet if this work be to revenge Gods Church againſt *Babylon*, he is a *bleſſed man that takes and daſhes the little ones againſt the ſtones*.

But there is one Text of Scripture (if no other were to be found in the whole booke of God) which is a *ſufficient* proofe, *that all are bleſſed or curſed, according as they doe or doe not helpe the Church of God in their need*: and that you ſhall finde, *Matth.* 25. 33. *&c.* The ſumme whereof in a few words is this, At the latter end of that Chapter is a deſcription of the *day of Iudgement*, and of the *manner* of Chriſts *proceeding at that day*. Firſt, that when *Ieſus Chriſt* ſhall come in the glory of his Father, he

he will divide all the *goaly* to the *right hand*, and all the *wicked* to the *left hand*, as the Shepheard divides the Sheepe from the Goates. Secondly, hee pronounces all on his right hand *bleſſed*, all upon the left hand *curſed*, *Come yee bleſſed, goe ye curſed.* Here are all the *bleſſed*, and *there are* all the *curſed.* Mark now what is aſſigned as the only reaſon and evidence why the one ſort are *bleſſed* and the other *curſed.* It is moſt plaine in the Scripture, that at *that day* the Lord will call people to an account for *all they have done in their whole courſe whether good or evill:* but in *this place, Chriſt* gathers all that ſhall be opened and come to receive bleſſing or curſing, reward or puniſhment to this one head, according as they *did or did not helpe and ſuccour his Church and people in their time of need.* To the one ſide, *Come yee bleſſed, receive the kingdome prepared for you,* for you viſited my *Church* when it was *ſick*, you gave *meate* to my *Church* when it was *hungry*, you gave *my people drink* when they were *thirſtie*, you tooke *them* in when they were *ſtrangers*, *you cloathed them when they were naked, you came to them when they were in priſon: Inaſmuch as you have done it unto theſe, even unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, you have done it unto me.* On the other ſide, *Goe ye curſed*, Why are they curſed? *I was hungry and ye gave me no meat, I was thirſty and ye gave me no drink, I was a ſtranger and ye took me not in, naked and you cloathed me not, ſick and in priſon and ye viſited me not: Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as you did it not unto the leaſt of one of theſe, ye did it not to me.* As if the Lord at that great day did take notice of nothing, but what the carriage of all people hath beene to or againſt his Church and children. What greater evidence can there be in the world, that men are *bleſſed* or *curſed*, than this? that they either *doe*, or *doe not help* the *Church of God.* This

as they help or help not the Church of God.

All are curſed or bleſſed.

This will yet be clearer if we conſider the *Church*. Firſt, as it ſtands in relation to *God*. Secondly, as *we* ſtand in relation to the *Church*.

Demonſtrated. Firſt from the Churches relation to God. Being made one with him in Chriſt.

Firſt, as the Church ſtands in relation to God: when I ſpeak of God in relation to the Church, or the Church to God; you muſt alwayes underſtand *God in Chriſt, Emanuel. God is in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelfe.* And thus the Churches relation to God gives us two excellent grounds of this doctrine.

Firſt, the Church and the meaneſt member of it is *united* to him, made *one* with him, they are not only his *ſervants*, his *friends*, ſuch as he *loves*, but he and they make but one *perſon*, I mean *one* myſticall *perſon*. Inſomuch that throughout the whole Scripture, he that bleſſeth them bleſſeth him, he that curſeth them curſeth him, he that relieveth them relieveth him, he that fights againſt them fights againſt him, he that touches them touches the Apple of his eye, all the relations which argue intimacy, tenderneſſe and dearneſſe, meet in this conjunction betwixt God and his Church, he is their *father*, they are his *children*, he is their *head*, they are his *members*, he is their *husband*, they are his *wife*; yea, they are called by *his name* and he vouchſafes to be called by *their name*. Take but this for granted, and you will make no doubt, but all men are bleſſed or curſed, as they do or do not help the Lord. The Lord *Iehovah* is the fountain of all bleſſedneſſe more then the Sun is the fountain of light, from his favour and good will neceſſarily flowes all happineſſe, and conſequently all are bleſſed or curſed according as the aſpect betwixt God and them is malignant or benevolent. This ground is fully laid down in that forementioned place, *Matth.* 25. *You did it to them, therefore you did it to me, you refuſed*

*sed it to them, therefore you refused it to me.* It is clearly there taught, but I believe there is no man on earth that understands it, or believes it fully. And that very Text gives me a hint to think so. Because the very *righteous* themselves, though they do all to the Saints out of the good will they bear to *Christ*, yet when *Christ* shall acknowledge this and say, *Come ye blessed, you fed me, you clothed me, you visited me; They shall answer Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and administred unto thee?* It shewes that themselves did not fully understand how near they were to Christ for whom they did all these things. I have somewhere read a story of a *Sarazen* Embassador, who being with a Christian Prince and seeing Nobles and great men to wait upon him, and the Prince himselfe to wait upon a Table full of poor ragged people, desired to know what they were, to whom he shewed so much respect, he answered to this effect, they were the servants of his Lord, and that he served his Saviour in them. Well said the Embassador, if your Lord have no better servants then these, I desire to be none of them. I care not for your Religion. And truly it is a hard thing to perswade not only *Sarazens* but even *Christians* themselves, that whatsoever is done to poor abjects, the off-scouring of the world, should be done to Christ himself. No earthly Prince would do so, equally to accept and reward him, that should give a nights lodging or any succour to one of his meanest and basest Grooms, as if it had been done to the person of himselfe or of his Son. Yet this is the very case betwixt Christ and his Church.

as they help or help not the Church of God.

Secondly, another ground from the Churches relation to God, is this, that as their persons are nearly

All are curſed or bleſſed

united to him, ſo their cauſe is his cauſe. As they account every cauſe of God to be their cauſe, ſo God accounts every cauſe of theirs to be his cauſe, 2 *Chro.* 20. *Moab and Ammon* and they of *Mount Seir*, came with a huge army againſt *Iehoſhaphat*, he and his people being ſuddenly ſurpriſed betake themſelves to prayer, and ſeek help from God: Now mark what Gods anſwer was, *Be not you afraid nor diſmayed by reaſon of this great multitude, the battell is not yours but Gods.* Was not the battell theirs? all they were worth lay upon that battell, their wives and children, their lives and liberties, their countrey and religion, lay all at the ſtake, and yet the battell none of theirs, that is, not ſo much theirs as Gods: ſo in the 74 *Pſalme*, When *Aſaph* had laid down all the Churches ſufferings, the pulling down of their Synagogues, the waſting of their Countrey, the reproach and ſcorn caſt upon them by their enemies, he intereſts God in all this, *Ariſe O God, pleade thine owne cauſe, remember how the fooliſh man reproacheth thee, forget not the voice of thine enemies.* Thus is their cauſe Gods cauſe, their enemies Gods enemies: and indeed if we look into it narrowly, whatſoever is done to them and their cauſe, good or evill, is done for Gods ſake. This then is a ſtrong argument to prove men bleſſed or curſed, according as they joyne with, or oppoſe the cauſe of God. Becauſe firſt, if it be Gods cauſe, it is a *good* cauſe. Secondly, it is a *noble* cauſe. Thirdly, it is a *ſucceſſefull* cauſe.

Verſe 15.

V. 22. 23.

Therefore a good cauſe.

Zeph. 3 4. Pſal. 11. 7. Pſal. 35. 27.

First, I ſay, it is a good cauſe. *The juſt Lord that is in the midſt of his Church will do no iniquity. The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſſe.* Now you know it is a bleſſed thing to have a good cauſe, though it be a meane cauſe. *David* often pleaded this before God, that his

cauſe

cause was just, his cause was upright. *Let them shout for joy, that favour my righteous cause.* And on the other side it must needs be a *cursed thing* to mannage a *cursed cause*: when *Davids* cause was *good*, his adversaries must needs be *evill*, and then he could foretell that *they should be ashamed and brought to confusion, clothed with reproach and dishonour who opposed themselves against him.* Psal. 35. 26.

as they help or help not the Church of God.

Secondly, being Gods cause, it is a *noble* cause, a man may possibly among men have a good cause and the thing but a trifle, a thing of no great consequence: but if it be Gods cause, let it appear never so contemptible, it is subservient to the highest end, that can possibly be thought of, the salvation of soules, the glory of God, &c. Honour uses to put men upon hard and desperate services, men will runne, wrestle, fight for a *crowne*, though but a *corruptible crowne*. There is comfort in doing good to one, but to advance the good of many, especially of the Church of God, how honourable, how glorious is it? 1 Cor. 9. 25.

A noble cause.

Thirdly, Gods cause is a *successefull* cause, *no weapon can prosper that is formed against it, and every tongue that rises up in judgement against it shall be condemned.* The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. This *Gamaliel* saw, when he advised the counsell of the High Priests, and Pharisees, and Rulers, to refrain from opposing the Apostles, *If this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it*, it is in vaine to fight against God. Since then the Churches cause is Gods cause, and consequently a *good* cause, a *noble* and *successfull* cause, you may easily hence conclude the *happinesse* that accompanies the promoting of it. And on the contrary as easily discern, how cursed a thing it is, not only to undergo the disgrace of mannaging a wicked and

A successefull cause. Isa. 44. 17. Act. 5. 39.

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and baſe enterpriſe, but to faile of that which wicked men uſe to cheriſh themſelves with, the hopes of the comfort of reward and obtaining their deſires.

2 Our relation to the Church.

Secondly, conſider our *relation* to the Church. And that affords three other excellent arguments to prove men bleſſed or curſed, according as they help or help not the Church of God.

All our talents are given us to ſerve the Church. 1 *Cor.*12.7.

Firſt, whatſoever abilities any man enjoyes, wherewith he may any wayes be uſefull, they are all given him to this very end, to make him ſerviceable to the Church. *All the manifeſtations of the ſpirit are given to profit withall.* All the gifts which Chriſt poured out when he aſcended up on high, are *for the perfecting of the Saints and the building up of the body of Chriſt. As every one hath received a gift, ſo let him miniſter, as good ſtewards of the manifold graces of God.* The Church is the common ſtorehouſe to which all our wealth muſt be carried. *Salus Eccleſiæ ſuprema lex.* Which being ſo, the happineſſe of every thing being the attaining of the end for which it was appointed, and the curſe of it the perverting of it to a wrong end, they muſt needs be bleſſed who ſerve the Church, and he muſt needs be curſed that deprives the Church of its own due. *Solomon* ſaith, that *he that withholds corn* in a time of famine, *the people ſhall curſe him*, though it were his own corn; but ſuppoſe a man had the keeping of the proviſion of the whole Town corn, which were none of his *own*, he only *intruſted* with the keyes of it, and ſhould let the people ſtarve for want of that food, which he ſhould keep purpoſely for them: or that a man had the keeping of a Magazen for an army to furniſh them with what might make them victorious, and their ſafety and victory hazarded, if not loſt, through his default; were not this man

*Ephes.*4.12. 1 *Pet.*4.10.

*Prov.*11.26.

man a Villaine and a Traitor to his countrey?

as they help or help not the Church of God.

Secondly, Conſider how *neare* the relation is betwixt the *Church* and *us*, (except we be of the *malignant* Church, of the *Dragons* armie, and then no more need be ſaid to prove men curſed.) the *Church* is our *Mother*, and all the *Saints* are our *Brethren*, a relation which all lawes of God and man do faſten dutie upon. *The eye that mocketh at his father or deſpiſeth to obey his mother, the Ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles ſhall eat it.* *Paul* thought he did no more than his dutie when *he had great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in his heart, and could wiſh himſelfe accurſed from Chriſt for his Brethren his kinſmen, who were Iſraelites.*

Our conjunction with the Church

Prov. 30. 17. Rom. 9. 2. 3.

Thirdly, All our own bleſſednesſe *ſtands* or *falls* with the bleſſednesſe of the Church. The Church is ſuch a corporation or myſticall body, as hath in it all the properties of a naturall body, wherein no members can be happy in an abſtracted ſenſe, but as parts conjoyned with the whole: becauſe every part hath beſides the neare relation to the whole, a ſubſiſtency in it, which is the foundation of any other good it receives. And ſo conſequently, the good or gaine of the whole is the gaine of every member, and whatſoever tends to the diſſolution of the whole, cannot but bee deſtructive to all the parts: As when a company of Merchants have but one joyned ſtocke, every penny gained or loſt is gaine or loſſe to them all. Or as it is with a company of paſſengers in the ſame Ship, ſave the veſſell and you ſave all, ſink the Ship, and every mans Cabbin is caſt away. Now this is a more prevailing argument than reaſon can make, it is grounded in nature which muſt prevaile with all; Nature makes heavie things to aſcend, rather than the whole ſhould be endangered by a

Our ſtanding and falling with the church. Rom. 12. 4. 1 Cor. 12. 12.

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*vacuam*. Nature teacher the tongue to cry out, when the toe is trod upon, the hand to work, that the belly ſtarve not, the feet to run, that the back be not cold. Every man finds this in the naturall body; and Gods Spirit dwelling in all the Saints workes the ſame ſpirituall diſpoſition in them that are partakers of the divine nature, *That there be no ſchiſme or diviſion in the body of Chriſt, but that all the members may have the ſame care one for another, That whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſhould ſuffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members ſhould rejoyce with it.*

1 Cor. 12. 25. 26.

By this time I hope it is cleare, that if we look upon *Gods promiſes* or *threatnings*, *mens experience* in all ages, or the *Churches intereſt* in *God*, his *neare union* with it, his *affection* to it, his *owning* the Churches *cauſe*, or if we conſider our own *engagements* to the Church, our neare *conjunction* with it, and under God the *dependance* of all our comforts and welfare upon it, we may and muſt conclude, *that all men are bleſſed or curſed according as they help or help not the church of God.*

Application

The reſt of the time I ſhall ſpend in the Application of it, that what is thus cleare to your judgement and conſcience, may by *Gods* bleſſing take due place in your hearts and converſations. And there are but *two* collections which I ſhall make for uſe. The firſt, briefly for *terrour* and *reproof*, the ſecond more largely, for *exhortation* and *duty*.

1 For reproofe to them who help againſt the church.

Firſt, for reproofe. This ſpeaks very ſadly againſt two ſorts of people whereof (God knowes) there are many hundreds of thouſands who yet profeſſe themſelvs to be Chriſtians. As firſt, Are all they curſed that doe not thus helpe the Lord againſt the mighty? what then are they, who inſtead of *helping the Lord againſt*

the

*the mighty*, do help *the mighty against the Lord*? who instead of joyning all their strength, and giving all their assistance to the Church in her distresse, do give all the assistance they can to the enemies of the *Church*, that they may do mischief against the *Church*? What shall we think of these men? How many are there who have as it were entred their names into the *Dragons muster-book*, openly bidding defiance against the *Church* of *Christ*, in every good cause? who walk Antipodes against the cause of God, like *Antiochus*, making warre against the Saints, like the little horne in *Daniel*, *wearing out the Saints of the most high* in all places where they can prevail? how many others, like the Kings and Princes in the 2. *Psal. Set themselves, and take counsell against the Lord and against his Annointed, digging as deep as hell for counsell to do* all the mischiefe they can to the servants of the *Lord Jesus Christ*? How many others with *Balaam*, do what in them lies to curse them for reward, who for very malice raile upon and revile the children of the most High? How many others, with *Edom*, *look upon the affliction of Israel, rejoycing over them in the day of their destruction, speaking proudly in the day of their distresse, crying out against Jerusalem, down with it, down with it even to the ground.* How many others, with *Amalek*, *smite the hindmost of Gods Church, all who are weake and feeble, when they are faint and weary*, adding sorrowes and increasing the burthen of the afflicted? How many, with *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*, are grieved when any are found to do good in *Israel*, endeavouring to hinder the building of *Sion*, and to *further* the repairing of the walls of *Babylon*? God knowes there are too many such, I hope not many such present here this day before the Lord. But concerning these, if there should be any such here, by what name or

as they help or helpe ot the Church of God.

Psal. 137. Deut. 25. 17

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title ſhall I call them? The Gyants who make war againſt heaven, θεομαχοι, fighters againſt *God*, I know no appellation fitter for them. But whatſoever they delight to be called, I moſt earneſtly beſeech them in their moſt ſecret thoughts to anſwer theſe few queſtions. By what injury hath the Lord provoked thee thus againſt him? what iniquity haſt thou found in him? what hurt hath Chriſt done to thee? what evils are his righteous ſervants guilty of againſt thee? Or if thou canſt give no reaſon of this, but only, *non amo te, nec poſſum dicere quare*. I know no reaſon, but my heart ſtands againſt them. What *honour* or *reward* doſt thou expect for this deſperate ſervice? What hope haſt thou of ſpeeding? Canſt thou make thy forces ſtrong enough to carry the day? O friend though thou beeſt *proud* and *daring*, yet be not *mad*, no weapon will pro-
Zech. 14.12. ſper which is formed againſt them. God hath ſworn it againſt all the people who fight againſt *Ieruſalem*, that *their fleſh ſhall conſume whileſt they ſtand upon their feet, their eyes ſhall rot in their holes, their tongue ſhall conſume away in their mouth*. O ſet not *Briars & Thorns to fight againſt devouring fire. Let the Potſheards ſtrive*
Iſay 27.4. Iſay 45.9. *with the Potſheards of the earth*, but let not a poor worm fight againſt his Maker. Thou art too weak to ſtrive with God. Kick not againſt theſe pricks, abſtain, *abſtain from thoſe men* of whom the Lord hath ſaid, *he that touches them, touches the apple of mine eye*.

2 To them who ſtand Neuters.

Secondly, There are others (not open enemies profeſſing to take part againſt the Church) who ſtand as *neuters*, who ſtand aloof off, ſhewing themſelves neither open enemies nor true friends, like the *Samaritans*, who feared the Lord and ſerved their Idols, of whom alſo *Ioſephus* ſaith, that when the *Iewes* were in

proſperity

proſperity the *Samaritans* were their friends, but were ever ſevered from them in their adverſity. But as the Lord ſaid of them when they feared the Lord and ſerved their Idols, *they feared not the Lord*: ſo he will one day ſay of theſe, they love not the Lord. They ſay ſuch as ſtand *neuters* are ordinarily cruſhed, which ſide ſoever wins, but the Lord acknowledges no *Neuters*. This text *curſes* all them who *come not out to help* him, as well as thoſe who *come to fight againſt him*. And our Saviour at the laſt day will as well denounce *go ye curſed* againſt them, who *gave them not bread* when they were hungry, as them who *plucked their bread away from them*. And in this caſe it is a certaine rule, for it is Chriſts rule, *he that is not with me, is againſt me*. And of theſe neuters there are two ſorts. Firſt, ſome ſtand neuters out of *policy*, becauſe they will ſee which ſide ſhall prevaile, that they may be ſure to joyn with the wining ſide; of theſe we have a notable example *Iudg* 8. when *Gideon* was purſuing *Zeba* aud *Zalmunnah* the Kings of Midian, he cals to the men of *Succoth*, and the men of *Penuel* to help to victuall his army, *Give I pray you loaves to them that follow me, for they are faint*. But they would firſt ſee what would be the event of the warre, *Are the heads of Zeba and Zalmunnah in thine hands, that we ſhould give bread unto thine army?* as who ſhould ſay, if you have gotten the day we are for you, if not, you muſt pardon us, we will look on a while longer; and even ſo do many falſehearted friends deale with the Church of God, turn *Iewes* when they have an honoured *Mordecai*, & as ready to cut their throats when *Haman* prevails againſt them. They will be ſure to be of the winning ſide that they may ſave their owne ſtake. But what *Gideons* anſwer was to the men of *Succoth*

as they help or help not the Church of God.

2 Kings 17. 33, 34, 41.

Matth. 12. 30

Of which two ſorts.

Some out of policy.

Iudges 8. 4, 5

Verſe 6.

Verſe 6, 7, 16, 17.

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and *Penuel*, *when the Lord hath delivered Zeba and Zalmunnah into mine hand, then will I tear your flesh with briars and thornes of the wilderneſſe, then will I beat down your Towers, and ſlay the men of your City*, and accordingly did it: ſuch like doom and execution ſhall all politick neuters receive from the hand of Chriſt.

2 Out of ſlothfull careleſſneſſe.

2. There is a ſecond ſort of neuters who neither oppoſe the Church nor help it; not out of policy, but meer ſluggiſhneſſe and deſire of eaſe, or baſeneſſe of ſpirit: loving only their worldly profits and ſenſuall pleaſures, nothing regarding what concernes religion, or the Church: like *Gallio* the Deputy of *Achaia*, who when the *Iewes* one while beat *Paul*, another while the Ruler of the Synagogue (as the Text ſayes) cared for none of theſe things. If it had been a matter of *right or equity*, things belonging to the *Roman* lawes, he was ready to appear; but if it be a *matter of Religion*, it was out of his element, he is indifferent whether the Beare bite the Dog, or the Dog bite the Beare, it is all one to him. Abundance of theſe are to be found every where; of whom we may ſay as *Salomon* in another caſe *The heart knowes his own bitterneſſe, &c.* They neither know the Churches bitterneſſe, nor are acquainted with the joy of it. Such (I think) were the men of *Iabeſh Gilead*, who when all the Tribes of Iſrael had bound themſelves by oath to proſecute that bloody murder of the *Levites* Concubine, againſt the *Benjamites*, and never to return untill they had avenged it, they let both ſides alone, they had buſineſſe enough of their own at home, not doubting but there were men enough to doe the work, though they kept themſelves quiet. But this neutrality of theirs coſt them dear in the end, their own heart blood paid for it: and it is moſt probable, that

Acts 18.14.

Prov. 14.10. Iud. 21.9.

*Meroz*

*Meroz* in this Text was guilty of no other fault. The Lord grant that they may be warnings to us, that we be not made warnings to others. I hope this may suffice for reproof. as they help or help not the Church of God.

The second Use, and that which I most aime at, is for exhortation. Oh that I were able to speak somewhat to raise up your spirits, to make you these blessed men who willingly help the Lord against the mighty: I confesse the *day*, the *occasion* of our meeting, this *Text*, and your *place* and *office* (Right Honourable and beloved) give me an infinite advantage to speak, if I were able to improve all for your good. The thing I aime at is, to send you home with *Luthers* resolution, who protested to God, that no portion which God could give him in this world should content him but only this, to be Gods servant, to be a *usefull* man in his Church; he would care neither for silver nor gold, neither for honour nor reproach: ease and labour should be all one, so that he might be accepted and usefull. And would the Lord vouchsafe to make my labour effectuall with you in this thing, I should be a blessed man in my work, and you should go home the blessedest company that ever met in such an Assembly. To this end I shall endeavour two things. Verse 10. 2 For Exhortation. To give our selves up to the service of the Church.

First, to give you *motives* or incentives to inflame your hearts after such a temper of spirit, that you may be willing to give up your selves to the help of the Lord and his Church. Motives thereunto.

Secondly, some *directions* to enable you in truth and reality to be usefull. And although most of the things that I shall speak do chiefly concerne you, our honourable Worthies, yet they will in their proportion reach the meanest in the congregation.

To

Men are cursed or blessed

To stir you up, consider these three motives.

1 From Gods honour.

First, the honour of God. Certainly the highest end of our living in this world, is to honour God. Hallowed be thy name, is the first petition of every one that saith the Lords Prayer. Now a man never gives glory to God as God, never sets up God in his right place, till he have devoted himselfe wholly and absolutely to serve him in what is most acceptable with him. And I have made it apparent that the Church of Christ is that field from which he expects the most plentifull crop of glory, and therefore would have the most cost bestowed on it; He gets glory by all our actions, but in what we do for the Church, we give him glory and that in the highest degree.

2 From our relation to the Church, & the Churches gaine.

Secondly, as for *Gods* sake, so for the *Churches* sake. It is ever well with the Church, when the members of it, do preferre the Churces good above their owne. *Polititians* and *Historians* observe this of States and Empires, that they usually thrive when the Subjects are *Common-wealths men*, every one endeavouring to promote the *publick* good. *Livie* observes this of *Rome*, that so long as men would leave their trades, farmes, and merchandize, Ladies part with their Jewels and ornaments, rather than any detriment should come to the City, all Nations were subdued to them: But when they grew *private wealths men*, every one labouring to preserve and adorn his own Cabin only; the ship presently was endangered and went to decay. This is as true of the Church. In all the rising times of it, God hath ever stirred up such noble and generous spirits, who have given themselves to the Lord, and the service of the Church. In the *Acts* of the *Apostles* you shall finde *that they were all of one heart and of one minde.*

*No*

as they help or help not the Church of God.

*No man said that ought of the things that he possessed was his own, they had all things common. Sold their possessions and goods, distributing them as every man had need,* and lived so, as if one soule possessed them all: This was the thriving time of the Church. Then their multitude increased by thousands and ten thousands, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplyed. But when once men grew to seek their *own things*, and not *the things of Iesus Christ*, and his Church, the Church soon fell into a languishing condition. As therefore you desire to keep up the spirits and strength of the Church, so labour to keep up your own spirits for the Church, as you desire that may not faint, so do you take heed of fainting in the service of it.

Cap. 2. 44. c. 4. 32. Act. 9. 31.

3 From our own goods both.

Thirdly, as for Gods sake, and the Churches sake, so for your own sake, for your own comfort and benefit, and that in many respects. As first, such a frame of Spirit as this, will be the best evidence of your owne safe condition, of your peace with God; tis a comfortable thing for a man to hate his lusts, to strive against them, to wait upon duties, to attend upon Ordinances, to be often enquiring, *What shall I do to be saved?* but all this may be but self-love (although such a love God approves of) but when the soule comes to enquire, what shall I do that Christ may be glorified, that his Church may be edified? to know no crosse but the Churches crosse? to preferre the joy of the Church before all his own peace and welfare? this is not only an Argument of a man looking Heavenward, but one that hath proceeded farre in the way; A Scholer of the first and highest form; and this is that which Saint *John* means, when he doth so frequently hang all

In our inward peace.

Men are curſed or bleſſed.

our evidence to Heaven, upon love of the brethren, *Hereby we know that we are tranſlated from death to life, becauſe we love the Brethren. In this are the children of*
1 Ioh 3.14 *God manifeſt from the children of the Devill: He that loves not his brother, is not of God: Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.*
Verſ.10. *Every one that loves God, loves him alſo that is begotten of him.* And many other expreſſions, as if Saint *Iohn* knew no other evidence but Love; now what love is it? He meanes it not of an inward affection only, to wiſh well to them, and ſo forth, but by love to ſerve our brethren, to lay out our ſelves, our lives, and parts, and all to ſerve them, *To lay downe our lives for the Brethren, as*
V.16. *Chriſt laid downe his life for us.* This was that that bore up *Hezekiahs* heart in the time of his
Iſa.38.3. ſickneſſe, when he could pleade, *Lord, remember that I have done that which is good in thy ſight.* What was the good that *Hezekiah* had done? even this, He had ſet himſelfe to purge Religion, to ſet up Gods Ordinances, to make the Church
Neh.13.14 proſper, given up himſelfe to the publick ſervice of the Church of God. This made *Nehemiah* comfortably to goe to God: Oh my God, wipe not out the good deeds that I have done for the Houſe of my God. And indeed there neither is, nor can be, any more certaine or infallible ſigne of a living member of Chriſts body, and of our communion with Jeſus Chriſt in his holy Spirit, that Spirit which dwels and acts in his whole myſticall body, then this, to ſympathize with the Church, to ſuffer in the ſufferings of it, to rejoyce in the conſolations of it, and to preferre the good of it, before that of

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our owne soules: Secondly, the honour of it may provoke you. Ingenuous and Noble Spirits will doe more for their honour then for their gaine: now if you weigh it in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, you shall finde, that to be a publick servant of the Church, to have an influence into the welfare of many, is the greatest honour which God communicates to any Creature; The Creatures which are for publick and universall use, are most noble and excellent, the World might stand well enough without Pearls and Jewels, and a thousand such like things, but the Fire, the Water, the Sunne, the Earth, which are servants to all, the World were ruined without them. Yea, this will make us like to the Angels, the excellentest of all Gods creatures, whose delightfull employment is to be *Ministring Spirits, sent forth to Minister for them, who shall bee heires of salvation.* What shall I say, this makes us (more then any thing else) like unto God Himselfe, *Thou art good and doest good*: almost all the knowledge which we have of the glory of God, comes from the good which God diffuseth into the Creature, and they partake most of GODS Nature, and most eminently beare his Image, who are his most usefull instruments in doing good to his Church and People: and if we marke it, we shall seldome finde the HOLY GHOST in the Scripture, to point out any as truly honourable, but under this notion, that they study the welfare and good of Sion. Marke them whom Saint *Paul* commends in the twelfth to the *Romans*, and ye shall see this is the matter of their praise: *Phœbe was a servant of*

as they help or help not the Church of God.

And our honour before God and men. Heb. 1. 14.

Men are curſed or bleſſed

the Church at Cenchrea, ſhe was a favourer of many: Aquila and Priſcilla were Pauls helpers, ready to lay downe their necks for a publick good. Mary, Andronicus, Vrban, Triphena, Triphoſa, and many other; this is their commendation, They laboured much in the Lord. So the houſhould of Stephanus, Paul would have all of them ſubject to the houſhold of Stephanus, he would have them numbred among the Patricii. What was the houſhold of Stephanus? It may be ſome honeſt Tradeſman in his Civill rank: but here is the Crowne: They addicted themſelves to the ſervice of the Saints: and of the meſſengers of the Churches, ſome good men that came on the Churches errand: the Apoſtle ſaith, if any inquired what they were, what ranck or quality they were of, he anſwers, they were The Meſſengers of the Churches, the glory of Chriſt. Yea Saint Paul of himſelfe, who ſeldome gloryed of himſelfe, who though hee were the greateſt Apoſtle, eſteemed himſelfe the greateſt ſinner, yet could not forbeare glorying in this, That hee laboured more abundantly then any others, that the Care of all the Churches lay upon him, that hee became all things to all men, that he might ſave ſome, and the Stigmata, the brands or markes that he bore about his body for his ſervice in the Church, hee did more glory in, than any Noble man can of his George or Blew Ribband: You ſhall ſee it, Galathians 6. Verſe 17. The Galathians had uſed Saint Paul ſomewhat courſely, judged his actions and intentions; and marke how Saint Paul ſeemes to take ſtate upon him, From henceforth let no man trouble mee;

1 Cor. 6. 15.

1 Cor. 8. 23.

What

What made him thus high in his Spirit? *I beare in my body*, the *Stigmata*, *the markes of the Lord Iesus*: This was a Badge of his Honour, and therefore they must use him honourably; and indeed if wee compare the honour and glory that rests upon men for the service of CHRIST and his Church, and that which vaine men seeke in other things, the truth of this would easily be seene. Suppose one man could say, this wound I received in fighting for a Mistris in a Duell: Another thus, my state is empaired in brangling Suites at Law: Another in Gameing and Whoring. What fruit? what what glory is in these things? But now on the other side, when a servant of God can say, *Haec manus ob Ecclesiam pugnando, &c.* These Offices I lost, this preferment I went without, thus was I scorned, thus is my body wasted for CHRISTS sake and for his Churches sake; this is glory indeed, this glory exceeds the happinesse of mortality, and will outlive all wealth and pleasure. And all experience shewes us, that however such men are most opposed and scorned by the enemies of the Church, who alwayes most fight against the Captaines and Leaders, yet among the Saints these are the most precious men, one of them esteemed worth a thousand of others: and this some thinke Saint *Paul* to aime at in the fifth to the *Romans*, when he saith, *scarcely for a righteous man will one dye, yet peradventure for a good man*, that is, a usefull Man, a serviceable Man, a Man whose life and labours benefits many, *Some would even dare to dye.* Thirdly, nor is the Reward lesse, at the present it may bee such instruments

as they help or help not the Church of God.

v. 7.

Thirdly in the greatnesse of our reward. Mat. 19 29.

All are curſed or bleſſed

ments may looſe *Houſes, or brethren, or children, or lands, and their owne lives*, but they ſhall finde it againe, *in this life an hundred fold, beſides the inheritance of everlaſting life*. Bread caſt upon theſe waters is ſeed ſowen in fertile ground, the boſome of the Church is the moſt fruitfull ſoile in the world. Fleſh and blood will never believe this, but Jeſus Chriſt the Lord of Life and Glory, whoſe all the Silver and Gold in the World is, who hath power enough to promote his ſervants and favourites, hath ſufficiently aſſured us of this in his Goſpell; Men will ſecurely adventure their eſtates upon Ropes and Cables in the deepe Seas, when the enſuring office is engaged for their ſecuritie; if yee dare truſt the inſureing office of Heaven, goe on, ſerve the Church, I promiſe in the Name of Chriſt to you, yee ſhall bee paid every penny, every houres ſleepe which yee have broken, every gray haire which is hereby ſcattered upon your head, every diſeaſe which yee have contracted, every reproach which you have ſuffered, ye ſhall looſe nothing by all or any of theſe, he will repay it you in this world an hundred fold in better things, it may be with trouble and perſecution, but in the world to come ye ſhall have life everlaſting; Thus farre the motives, which would the Lord let ſinke into your hearts, how would yee with *Paul* rejoyce to be offered up a Sacrifice for the Church of Chriſt? how willingly would yee continue to ſpend, and to bee ſpent in ſo good a worke?

Secondly, ſome directions how we may bee able to doe this: where

First,

First, I shall shew what is requisite to prepare us and fit us to be the Churches servants. Secondly, how and wherein, they that are fit should help the Church. as they help or help not the Church of God.

First, men must bee fitted for it; this *Mercury* is not made of every wood; the Lord needs no Instruments; if hee use any, it is *propter munificentiam*, not *propter indigentiam*; because hee meanes to honour them, not because they can benefit him: and therefore hee will make them choice spirits, rare and singular men, to whom he will thus communicate his own glory, and three things must meet in them. First, They must be godly; a Generall in an Army, neither gives pay nor command to any, untill they bee duly entred into his musterbook: Now men are never numbred among the Lambs followers, their names are not entred into his List, untill they be Saints. Read *Revelation*, where ever the Lambs followers are described, *They are such as have washed their Robes, made them white in the blood of the Lamb, serving him night and day; they are redeemed from the earth; in their mouth is found no guile.* They that are with the Lamb are *called and chosen and faithfull.* And it must needs be so; for so long as men are in their unregenerate condition, they are Satans vassals in the maine; there is not in them a *substratum* of reall usefulnesse to the Church; their heart cannot be with the Lord nor his people: Tis only the new life which is the right principle of this service which is here expected: If therefore the Lord have kindled in any of your hearts a desire to doe him service; I beseech

Meanes to make us usefull.

The persons must be

First Godly.

Rev. 7, 14.

14, 4.

All are cursed or blessed

beseech you, first, humble your souls deeply before God for you sinnes; get your Robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, rest not till the Spirit of Christ come to dwell in you, and when yee have, once with the *Thessalonians*, given your selves first to the Lord, then yee are fit to give your selves to the Church for the Lords sake.

2 Deniers of themselves.

Secondly, as they must be *godly*, who would be servants to the Church; so they must learn to *deny themselves*; they must be taken off from all private selfe-engagements; they must set light by their own ease, their own profit, and their own life: *If any man* (saith Christ) *come to me, and hate not his father,* Luke 14 26. *and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot bee my Disciple.* Search through all the Scriptures, you shall hardly finde a man who ever was fitted to bee usefull in the Church, till he had set himselfe aside; 2 Tim 2.4. *No man that warreth, entangleth himselfe with the affaires of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a souldier.* And therefore it was the *A,B,C*, which Christ taught all his followers, even this lesson of *selfe-deniall*: You shall read *Mat.* 20. *v.* 22. That when the mother of *Iames* and *Iohn* came to seek *preferment* at Christs hand for her two sonnes, that the one might sit at his *right* hand, and the other at his *left* in his Kingdome; Christ presently nips, that motion in the head, and tells them, that instead of expecting such high and pleasant things in this world, they must (if they meant to be his Apostles) prepare to *drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptisme*; that is, take paines and suffer trouble.

And

And verily, sad experience hath taught this, That men are never cordiall to the Church of Christ, who *embrace this present world.* It is recorded of the King of *Navarre* then a Protestant, being pressed by *Beza*, to appear more in the Cause of God, and to own Religion to the purpose: He makes him answer to this effect, That he was their friend, but he resolved to put no further to Sea, then that he might *get to shore if a storme should rise*; he resolved not to hazard his hopes of the Crown of *France*, and you know what became of him. So when men will make Religion as *twelve*, and the world as *thirteen*, they will in sad tryals, with *Demas*, *forsake the cause and servants of God, and embrace the present world*: Like those Potters, recorded in the first of the *Chronicles*, who *dwelt among plants and hedges: There they dwelt with the King for his work.* A brand which the holy Ghost sets upon them, who when *Cyrus* proclaimed liberty and incouragement, to return to *Jerusalem*, to rebuild the Temple, and set up the Worship of God, refused to go back with their Brethren, and chose rather to dwell among *plants* and *hedges*, then to hazard a gainfull Trade, which they made of the Kings work. O beloved, take heed of these choaking Thorns; the riches, cares, and pleasures of this World; especially, beware of the World, when it comes with flattering allurements. Many ships have been swallowed in a *calm*, when they have out-rid severall *storms*. Troubles and persecutions, (like the winde in *Plutarchs* Parable) make men gird their cloak (their profession of Religion, and service to the Cause of God) closer to them, when the

as they help or help not Gods Chur.

2 Tim. 4. 23.

Men are cursed or blessed

warm Sun-shine of preferments steals it from them:

*Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere vitam.*

There is a notable story of a Souldier of *Antigonus*, one whom the Prince observed to be a very valiant man, ready to adventure upon any desperate service, and therefore much favoured him; and observing that he still looked pale and lean, would needs know what he ayled, and finding that he had a secret and dangerous disease, he caused all possible means to be used for his recovery, which when it was accomplished, the Prince observed him to be lesse forward in service then formerly, and demanding the reason, he ingenuously acknowledged that now he felt the sweetnesse of life, and was loth to lose it. And thus do many thousands, who with *Jonathan*, when they come into a Wood that drops with Honey, leave the chase of Gods enemies, and feed upon the sweetnesse of worldly advancement.

Acts 20. 24. But, O ye Worthies, *Fly all these things*; with *Paul*, *esteem your lives not dear to you: Let no earthly thing move you, so you may finish your course and service appointed you, from, and for the Lord Jesus Christ*; and conclude with *Esther*, *if I perish, I perish.*

3. They must love the church

Thirdly, Whosoever would be a reall usefull instrument for the good of the Church, must get an *unfaigned love* to the Church planted in his heart, that it may bear fruit in his life and actions. All we do is nothing but *our labour of love*. *Love* will force more then the strappado, draw more then a yoke of Oxen;

Oxen; It is a ſweet and ſtrong tyrant. When the Apoſtle *Paul* had preſſed the *Corinthians* earneſtly to ſtudy for the beſt gifts, to make them uſefull in the Church: And to this purpoſe gives them a Catalogue of the ſeverall gifts and graces, which Chriſt for this end, had ſhed abroad, when he aſcended up on high: Yet in the laſt verſe of that Chapter, he promiſeth to *ſhew them a more excellent way*, and that is the way of *love*, which he layes down in the thirteenth Chapter; which will *do* all things, *endure* all things, without which, if men had the tongues of men and Angels, all other gifts of propheſie, knowledge, &c. *they are but as ſounding braſſe, or tinckling cymbals.* This is the reaſon why Saint *John* throughout all his Epiſtles, cals for almoſt nothing but *love*; becauſe in that he cals for all. *My little children, love one another.* And this is alſo the reaſon, why the Devil doth ſo infinitely labour to ſow the tares of diviſion in the field of the Church; he knows, if he can break the *bond of love*, he breaks the *bond of perfection*, and opens the *flood gates* to confuſion. Reſt not therefore, who ever thou art that deſireſt to do good in the Church, till the love of it be fixed in thy Breſt, as deeply as the love of the *Ark* was in the heart of the wife of *Phinehas*, who *died* for grief when the *Ark* of God was taken: Or as *Calice* is ſaid to have been in Queen *Maries*, who affirmed, that *if her body were opened, Calice would be found in her heart.* To this end, conſider often, how dear the Church is to thy dear Redeemer; how comely and beautifull it is in it ſelf; *comely as the curtains of Solomon*, even when it is *black as the tents of*

as they help or help not the Church of God

1 Cor. 12. 27, 28.

All are curſed or bleſſed

*Kedar* with perſecution: How deformed, unclean, and every way vain *all other ſocieties* are in compariſon of *this*; *As the Lilly among the thorns*; How neer to thy ſelf, begotten of the ſame ſeed, laid in the ſame womb with thee, and thou alſo wert laid in its womb, and ſucked its breſts, redeemed with the ſame blood, enjoyeſt all the ſame priviledges, haſt all thy welfare in this world wrapt up in its welfare, and expecteſt to live with it to all eternity in the ſame glory. Theſe thoughts rightly working upon thy heart, would make thee willingly ſpend, and be ſpent for the Churches good: Thy ſervices would not be as the motion of a ſtone caſt out of a ſling, at firſt ſwift by virtue of a violent impreſſion; but conſtant and ſtrongeſt, rather toward the latter end, as thoſe motions are ſaid to be, which proceed from a naturall inward principle. So then you eaſily apprehend the excellent uſe, and indeed the neceſſity of the concurrence of theſe three qualifications of *godlineſſe*, *ſelf-deniall*, and *love*, to the making up of a good Church-man: The Lord make them evident in all your hearts and wayes.

What theſe friends of the Church muſt do.

Next follows, What men thus accompliſhed may and muſt do for the Church. The ſervice required may be reduced to theſe two heads:

Firſt, Somewhat to prepare us for action.

Secondly, To act as we are prepared.

1 By way of preparation, they muſt

By way of preparation three things are requiſite: Firſt, carefully to *inform* our ſelves of the ſtate and condition in which the Church is; otherwiſe we deprive our ſelves of all poſſibilitie of being helpfull to it. Be a man never ſo willing, and never ſo able

able to relieve the distresses of his brethren, he can neither heal the sick, nor help the poor, unlesse he knew who and where they were that needed, and what help they wanted. This made *Nehemiah* so diligently to enquire concerning *Jerusalem, and his brethren which were left of the captivity.* This made *Daniel* search into *Ieremiahs* Propheſies, to know the condition of the Church, and learn his own duty.

help or help not Gods Church.

know the wants of the Church Nehe. 1.2.

Dan. 9.

2. This enquiry must not be out of Athenian curiosity, as most people enquire after news; but so to know, as to work our hearts to a *fellow-feeling* of their condition, otherwise all our intelligence will be as dry clouds, flying over our heads without a drop of rain. Thus did *Nehemiah* as soon as he understood that *his brethren were in great affliction and reproach, the wall of Ieruſalem broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire, he sate down and wept:* This prepared him for the good service he did afterward. Thus also did *Daniel*, who when God had shewed him, though but in a vision, the calamities that were to come upon the Church of the Jews by *Antiochus Epiphanes, he fainted, and was sick certain dayes.* And the want of this fellow-feeling is both taxed and threatned by God in *Amos 6. No man is sorry for the affliction of Ioseph.* God esteeming it an argument of little love to sit down with *Haman* at a banquet, when the Citie of *Shushan* is in perplexity.

2. Sympathize with them.

Nehe. 2. 4.

Dan. 8. 27.

3. As we must know and be affected with the Churches want, so we must enquire what is in *our power* to do for it, wherein *we* may be helpfull. This I shall have occasion to speak of afterward.

3. They must enquire what is in their hand to help.

All are curſed or bleſſed

The ſecond ſort of directions are for action. And theſe may be brought to two heads.

2. By way of action, they muſt

First, ſomewhat we muſt do immediately *to God for the Church.*

Secondly, ſomewhat we muſt do *for the Church from God.*

1. Pray for it.

First, That which we are to do to God for the Church is to pray for it. I name this *firſt*, becauſe it is the firſt and chiefeſt ſervice that we can perform. If any other talent be a peny, Prayer is a pound. This is the talent of all talents; concerning which I ſhall ſpeak a little more fully, as the ſeaſonableneſſe of it requires.

First, it muſt be granted, that all the friends of the Church *may help it* with their prayers: If with *Peter* they have no ſilver nor gold, but will give ſuch as they have, they may afford a ſubſidy of Prayer. They have all the ſpirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, *Abba, Father*: So that what the Maſter of the ſhip ſaid to *Jonah*, *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? Ariſe and call upon thy God:* (though he could neither ſit at ſtern, nor handle the tacklings, yet he might pray;) may be ſaid to any man in regard of the Church; though thou canſt neither run, nor ride, nor write, nor fight, yet thou canſt pray: Awake, awake. And as plain it is, that *God requires* it ſhould be ſo. *O pray for the peace of Jeruſalem. You that make mention of the Lord keep not ſilence: Give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh and make Jeruſalem the praiſe of the earth. You that have eſcaped the ſword, remember the Lord afar off, and let Jeruſalem come into your minde.* But the chief thing I aym at is, to diſcover the power of Prayer:

Jonah 1.6.

Iſa. 122.6.

Iſai. 62. 6, 7.

Jer. 51. 50.

Which

Which I shall never be able fully to expresse: None can tell what *Prayer* can do, but he that can tell what *God* can do. Yet these few conclusions may give some light toward it. as they help or help not the Church of God.

What great things Prayer is able to do.

First, *God hath not promised to do any thing without it.* It is confest, he doth many things without Prayer, but he hath not *promised* to do any thing for his Church without it. *All this will I do,* (saith the Lord) *but for all these things will I be enquired by the house of Israel.* Ezek. 36. 37.

Secondly, As he hath promised to do nothing without, so he *will do all things by it: I will visit you* (saith God) *and perform my good word toward you*; but you must *perform* your *good work* towards me. *Then shall ye call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me. Ask and you shall receive: This is the confidence that we have, that whatsoever we ask according to his will, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him.* What cannot Prayer do? It is able to overthrow all enemies: *When I pray, mine enemies shall turn back.* An hundred eighty five thousand were overthrown in one night, after the Prayer of *Hezekiah.* It is able to turn away all plagues, *pestilence; famine, sword, wilde-beasts*; whatsoever plague or sickness there be, prayer and supplication will heal all. It is able to bring down all mercies; It is the key of Heaven: *Eliah*, a man subject to the same infirmities with us, he prayed, and the Heaven was *shut*; he prayed again, and the Heaven was *opened.* It is the most efficacious engine in the world: it opened the prison doors, and the Iron gate, to set *Peter* at liberty. It is the sum of all wisdom, strength, and policy. What should I say more? Jere. 29. 10, 12. 1 Joh. 14. 15. Psal. 56. 9. Isa. 37. 36. 1 King. 8. 37, 39.

All are curſed or bleſſed.

more? It prevails over God himſelf. *Jacob wraſtled with God*, and prevailed: What was his wraſtling? What was the ſtrength, whereby, *as a Prince, he had power with God?* Even this, *he wept, and made ſupplication to him.* It will not onely ſtop the Sun in his courſe, as *Joſhua* did; *Sun ſtand thou ſtill in Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon*; but (with reverence be it ſpoken) it holds that hand which rules Heaven and Earth. Let me alone, ſaid God to *Moſes, that I may deſtroy them: Moſes* prayer hindered God from doing what he ſeemed reſolved to do. *He ſaid he would have deſtroyed them, had not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the gap, to turn away his wrathfull indignation.* And thus ſome interpret that place of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Ask me of things to come, concerning my Sons; and as concerning the works of my hands, command ye me:* As if God had made over his own omnipotency to Prayer.

Gen. 32. 26. and Hoſ. 12. 4.

Exod. 32. 10.

Iſai. 45. 11

*Queſt.* But whence is it that Prayer becomes thus efficacious? What is there in the ſubmiſſions and ſupplications of poor worms to work ſuch wonders?

*Anſw.* And the Reaſons of it.

I anſwer, Theſe four things meet in prayer, which are the ſtrength of it, and may be your ſatisfaction. Firſt, The *perſons* who pray, are Gods *own children*, dearer to him then Heaven and Earth, tender as the Apple of his own eye: And we who are parents know how prevalent the cries of our own children are, *We being evil can give good things to our children.* Secondly, Gods *own ſpirit dictates* and endites their prayers for them: *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf makes intercеßion for us.* Now as it is ſaid of the Son, *I know thou heareſt me*

Rom. 8. 26

*alwayes;*

*alwayes*; so may it be said of the Spirit. What regard soever he may bear to *us* poor sinners, he will certainly regard the intercessions of his *own Spirit*. as they help or help not the Church of God.

Thirdly, The Prayers of Gods people they are offered up and presented to God by *his own Son*, our Lord Jesus Christ, *the high Priest of our profession, the Angel of his presence, who is at the right hand of God, who daily makes intercession for us*, as the Spirit makes *intercession in us*, and mingles *his incense*, *with the prayers of the Saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne.* Revel. 8. 3.

Fourthly, There is this in prayer, that it gives the *greatest glory unto God.* Of all gifts or graces which God hath given to any creature, never any thing (except faith onely) was found to give that glory to God which prayer doth; especially in these *two things.* First, It *brings God into the field*, to fight the battel for them, makes him to work all their works for them; as indeed he doth. Whatsoever a man prayes for, he doth by interpretation say, Lord, I never shall have this, unlesse thou *give* it me; I never shall *do this*, unlesse *thou do* it for me. And that is the reason why in 2 *Chron.* 20. after *Hezekiah* and his people had prayed, and professed they had no strength of their own, left the work onely and wholly upon Gods hand: Then God tels them, *The battel is not yours, but Gods:* Now you have put it into my hands, you shall see what I will do for you. And secondly, When the work is done it ascribes the *praise and glory* of all to him, to whom alone it is due. If we mark it, God hath little glory in the world for those good things which men receive without Prayer; their friends, parts, wit, industry,

All are curſed or bleſſed

muſt ſhare with God; but what is *won* by Prayer is *worn* with thankfulneſſe; there being a naturall relation betwixt *praying* and *praiſing*, as the rivers return by the ſea from whence they come.

Application of this.

O that I were able to teach you the right uſe of this engine. And firſt let me ſpeak to you (right Honourable and Beloved) the Lords and Commons aſſembled in this Parliament: Give me leave to

Shewing, by way of inſtruction,

ſhew you the true ſpring of all that good, which hath come through your hands, ſince your happy entrance upon your great work. God knows I would not eclipſe your worth nor due praiſe: We rejoyce in you, and bleſſe God for you; we have received great mercies by your means: but are you the cauſes of them? Have they been done by your wiſdom and forecaſt, or for any worthineſſe found in your ſelves? Hath not God done them all almoſt by contraries? Have not you been many times at a loſſe, even at your wits end? Hath not God marvellouſly diſcovered wicked enterpriſes againſt you, and almoſt miraculouſly preſerved you by his own naked arm, ever ſince the beginning of your meeting? Give therefore the glory where it is due, you ſhall have the honour of excellent inſtruments, but this honour is too high for you. Know therefore, Beloved, (and it will encreaſe your honour to acknowledge it) that Prayer, and God by Prayer hath done all this: While you have been with *Joſhuah fighting* in the valley, *Moſes*, *Aaron* and *Hur* have been *at prayer* upon the *mountain*. God hath poured out upon many parts of the Kingdom, but more eſpecially in and about this great City, a moſt fervent Spirit of Prayer:

1. Whence all our preſent mercies and deliverances come.

Prayer: In many thousand families you are every day mentioned at the throne of grace; few dayes of your Sessions have passed over, without extraordinary fasting and prayer, either publike or private on your behalf: And when prayer doth thus ascend, mercies must needs descend. Let God therfore have the chief honour for pouring out the spirit of prayer and supplication, the fruit whereof is the upholding your hearts and spirits daily in your work. as they help or help not Gods Chur.

And this also intimates the best hope we have of your good successe for the time to come, even because God hath put it into the heart of the *Kings Majesty and your selves*, to put the whole Kingdom into a *posture of prayer*; we hope your care in putting the Kingdom into a *posture of defence*, will be serviceable: But we expect our greatest help and advantage, as from our *daily prayers*, so more especially from those *solemn monethly days* of humiliation, that are afforded and appointed us. And our hopes of more.

*William* the Conquerour, when he was Duke of *Normandy* (according to the superstition of those times) builded many Abbies, Monasteries and Nunneries, and told his friends he was at this cost to strengthen his Kingdom, esteeming them as strong fortifications, wherein he provided many to fight against the devill, the world, and the flesh: This he said according to his light. I can more truely speak from God, that in every congregation where godly Ministers, and godly people shall, according to publike direction, lie in the dust, fasting, and mourning, and praying before the Lord; there are strong holds set up for the safetie of the Kingdom.

Men are cursed or blessed

Secondly, How sadly doth this speak against many thousands of professed Christians! Some *cannot* pray, some *will not* pray, sure I am, many *do not* pray, who in all this long time of *Germanies* afflictions have never separated themselves to afford one dayes prayer for the help of their brethren: And in all our own exigents and darknesses have never stood upon the Walls to help either *England*, *Scotland*, *Ireland*, King, or Parliament: These are a miserable generation. And this their not praying for the Church is a sad token against them, that when the Church of Christ shall *sing for joy of heart*, *themselves shall cry for sorrow of heart*, *and howl for vexation of spirit*.

2. For reproof.

Isa. 65. 14.

What remaineth then, but that all you who make mention of the Lord, and bear his Name, who have received this mercy, that you may have accesse to the throne of grace, be quickned up, for the time to come, to stand upon the Wals, to give God no rest night nor day, to let *Jerusalem* come into your minde, constantly to do that which Master *Bradford* made the subscription of his letters, *pray*, *pray*, *pray*. God hath done *great things* for us; but many *great things* are yet to be done; much rubbish to be removed; many obstructions to be cleared, many enemies to be overthrown. *Ireland* is to be relieved, Religion to be established; *Prayer* may do all this, we may overmatch all our enemies by *prayer*, discover all their plots by *Prayer*. Let us not be traytors against the Church and State, in slighting or forbearing the use of that, which may work all our works for us; this is to betray the Forts of the Kingdom.

3. Exhortation to help the Church by Prayer.

Motives thereunto.

dom. But remember when I exhort you to pray, I mean; First, it must be *prayer* indeed; many can read *prayers*, say *prayers*, sing *prayers*, many can conceive or utter *prayers*, who yet cannot pray: Prayer is a pouring out of the soul to God. And secondly, this spirit poured out in Prayer, must be a pure spirit: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.* And thirdly, This prayer must be a prayer of faith; Pray in faith, and waver not; and in a prayer of faith, three things must meet. First, That the things begg'd be according to the will of God. Secondly, That they be begg'd in the name of Christ. Thirdly, That we relie upon the faithfulnesse of God, for the performance of them. This is to pray in Faith. Fourthly, Our prayers must be fervent, humble, constant; and when we have prayed, we must remember, that though prayer be the great means, yet prayer is not all the means. Prayer must quicken us up *to* the use of other means, and sanctifie us *in* the use of other means; Other means are fruitlesse without prayer, and prayer not seconded with the use of other means, where they may be had, prevails not. These things you cannot be ignorant of, and therefore I onely point at them, especially in these streights of time.

as they help or helpnot the Church of God.

Psal. 66. And direction herein.

One thing more I must needs advise about, before I passe from this great help of prayer. And that is, In what esteem praying spirits should be had amongst all wisemen; I know the world slights and scorns them, but in truth they are the very *Chariots and Horsemen of Israel*: Ten praying men might have saved *Sodom*, and the Cities round about.

2. Exhortation to prize such as have the spirit of Prayer.

All are curſed or bleſſed.

*Solomon* ſaith, *There was a little City and few men it, and a poor wiſe man by his wiſdom delivered this Citie*
Eccle. 9. 14 *from the ſiege of a great King; Yet no man remembred that ſame poor man.* Truely thus it is with poor praying Chriſtians, they deliver the Iland, and yet no man regards them. *David* knew how to prize ſuch ſpirits, who, though he were a King, thought them fit to be his companions who called upon the name
Rom. 15. 30. of God. *Paul* knew how to prize them who begged for prayers, as a priſoner for a ranſome, *Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſts ſake, that you pray for me.* Yea, *Joaſh* though an Idolater, when the praying Prophet *Eliſha* lay a dying, wept, and cryed, as ſenſible of looſing the chief ſupport of
2 Kings 13. 14. his Kingdom, *O my father, my father, the Chariots of Iſrael, and the horſemen thereof.* Nay, which is yet more, a Heathen Emperour *Marcus Aurelius*, finding by the experience the power of the prayers of Chriſtians, gave all the world notice of it, ſtaid the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians, and called that band of Chriſtians *Legio fulminatrix*, the thundring band. Let us therefore not fall ſhort of heathens, let us not undervalue or ſlight them, who carry the Keyes of
Iſai. 19. 24. Heaven at their girdle. Verily (Right Honourable and Beloved) if you knew what bleſſings they are in the midſt of the land, you would take pleaſure in them, you would ſeek for *praying* friends, *praying* ſervants, *praying* tenants; you would deſire to have a ſtock go in every one of their veſſels. You would ſay to them all, as they to their companions going up to the houſe of God, *To pray before the Lord, and*
Zech. 8. 21, &c. *to ſeek the Lord of hoſts, I will go alſo.* Yea, you would

*lay*

*lay hold upon the skirts of theſe men, ſaying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* This is the greateſt help which we can give to the Church of Chriſt. This we do immediately *to* God *for* the Church. help or help not Gods Church.

There are ſome things alſo which we muſt do *for* the Church *from* God: The particulars are innumerable, but in regard the time is wholly ſpent, I ſhall give you the ſum of all in one ſhort concluſion. And indeed, a little time may make it clear to your underſtandings, although the practiſe of it require the ſtudy of your whole lives. 1. To employ al our gifts and talents as ſtewards and ſervants for the Church.

The concluſion is this, Whatſoever abilities any have received in any kinde, they are given to them to this very end, to be ſerviceable and uſefull to the Church of Chriſt with them: *All the manifeſtations of the ſpirit* in gifts and graces, *are chiefly given* for this end, *to profit* the Church with; all the livelihood of our naturall faculties, of our actions, of our worldly wealth, of office or authority, are given us, not for our own carnall ends, no nor primarily for our own ſalvation; but that with them all we ſhould be *as good Stewards of the manifold graces of God.* So that our hands if skilfull to write, ſhould be employed as Secretaries of the Church, our feet as *Meſſengers* of the *Church*, our tongues as *Advocates* for the *Church*, our Wiſdom and Learning as *Counſellours* for the *Church*, our wealth as *Stewards* or *Almoners* for the *Church*. Whatever any man hath, the Lord would have his Church to be the common ſtore-houſe, into which all ſhould be brought, the body to which all ſhould be ſerviceable: 1 Cor. 12. 7. 1 Pet. 4. 10.

All are curſed or bleſſed

able: Juſt as it was when the Tabernacle was to be built: Not onely *Bezaleel* and *Aholiah*, men skilfull in all manner of work, were to beſtow their labours upon it; but all with whom any thing was to be found, whether ſilver or braſſe, or fine linnen, or Goats hair, or Badgers skins, or Rams skins; all with a willing heart were to bring it in; yea, the very women that could ſpin either linnen, or woollen, or hair, were all to be employed to further the work of the Tabernacle.

Exod. 35.

This needs no proof, every mans ſpirit carries him to do all this for whatſoever is his *ſummum bonum*, his chiefeſt happineſſe; ſuch as make Mammon their God, or their belly, do readily contribute all they *have* or can *do* to the ſervice of them. I ſhall ſhut up all with a brief Application; Firſt, For reproof; Secondly, For duty.

Application of this,

How ſadly doth this ſpeak concerning them whoſe ſerviceableneſſe to the Church, conſiſts onely in empty and barren wiſhes! The ſame which they can, and do afford, to any creature which they ſee to be in diſtreſſe; they love the *Church*, they pity the miſeries of the *Church*, they are ſorry for *Germany*, when they think on it, and that is but ſeldom: They grieve for *Ireland*; but require either their hands to underwrite, their legs to walk, their purſes to contribute, their authority to command or countenance, *&c.* they can ſpare none of all theſe. They have a bottomleſſe *gulf* called *ſelf*, which ſwallows all they *are*, *have*, or *can do*, and yet is never ſatisfied. Ask them if they have a heart to do nothing for the *Church*, they anſwer readily, they

1. For reproof of moſt who are ſtrangers to this duty.

pray

pray for it with all their heart, and that is all they can do. But let all ſuch falſe-hearted Chriſtians know, that the Lord needs none of their help, and cares as little for their dry barren Prayers, as the poor begger did for the Biſhops bleſſing, who begging for a peny, but denyed that, and put off with the offer of a Benediction, told him, that he perceived his peny was better then his bleſſing, otherwiſe he had denyed him that alſo. In the mean time think how thou wilt appear in the day of thine account, when the not having much, but the improving of what we had to our maſters advantage, will bring the *Euge bone ſerve*; when others ſhall come in and ſay, Lord thy pound hath gained five pounds; when (as *Gregory* ſayes) *Peter* ſhall come in with his gain of *Judea*, *Andrew* of *Affrica*, *Thomas* of *India*, *Paul*, and the reſt, of many Nations; Miniſters bring in their ſheaves of ſouls, private Chriſtians their gleanings and bundles; and thou appear empty, *thy* talent buried or embezelled, *thy* age ſpent, *thy* candle burnt out, nothing done by *thee* for the Church; when it ſhall appear that thou haſt had gold and ſilver *to feather thy own neſt*, power and authoritie to terrifie thy neighbours; like a great Tree crushing or overdropping all that ſtand neer thee; and haſt had this worlds goods, as the Leviathan the Sea, onely to take thy pleaſure, and ſatisfie thy luſts in them. Wo unto thee if thy Maſter finde thee thus doing. This gain of thy Talents, will be the loſſe of thy own ſoul.

as they help or help not the Church of God.

Luke 12. 45.

2. For Exhortation.

1. To the Houſe of Parliament.

Secondly, For exhortation to all, eſpecially to you Right Honourable, and Beloved; What words

Men are curſed or bleſſed

ſhall I uſe? How ſhall I make up a ſtrength to prevail with you, to give up your ſelves and all you have, ſo wholly to the Lord, and to his Church, that all your other outward occaſions may not ſo much as dare to expect any thing from you, ſo long as the Church hath need of it; that your pleaſures and ſuperfluities, nay, your profits, and ſometimes neceſſities, may never offer to come in competition with the Church of God, for any thing which you call yours. O that you could hear the Lord ſpeaking to you in the ſame language as once he ſpake to *Cyrus*, *For Jacob my ſervants ſake, and Iſrael mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name!* I confeſſe, that inſtead of exhorting, we have juſt cauſe to bleſſe God for you, when we conſider how you, who heretofore have lived at eaſe, and in pleaſure, enjoying the delights of the ſons of men, have now changed your *pleaſures* for *pains*, your *delights* for *dangers*, your *profits* and *gains* for *expences*, your *houſes* for *lodgings*, and ſtill continue to deny your ſelves in all theſe things, and go on in your unwearied labours for the Church and Cauſe of God. This is great matter of praiſe to God, and honour to your ſelves. Generous plants and odoriferous ſpices (they ſay) grow onely in hot regions: Such fruits as yours are not brought forth by every plant, ſuch plants as you grow not on every ground. But go ye on, ye Nobles and Worthies, forget what is behinde; God and his people will not forget it: Look and preſſe to the work which yet remains: Get the reſolution of *Ziſca* that brave *Bohemian* Captain, who not onely was willing to fight while he lived, but bequeathed his skin when he died,

died, to be made a drum head for the service of the war. Hold out to the end, *Cloath ye with zeal, as with a cloak, put on righteousnesse as your ornament:* Be good shepherds still, to rescue and feed the flock committed to you: Be so many *Saviours upon mount Sion.* All this shall be done for the best Master; all this seed will be sown in the most fruitfull ground, the bosome of the Church: And to quicken you the more, remember how much of the golden time which is gone *you* have wasted, with *Domitian,* in catching of flies; how much of *your* estate hath been spent needlessly in pictures, feastings, buildings, sportings, if not worse, in riot and disorder; how much of *your* strength hath been bestowed in the service of this world, and the God of it: And now when the gray hairs are scattered upon many of you, and God might justly cast you aside as broken vessels, the Lord should choose you, and accept you in the most honourable service that the sons of men are capable of; nay, that service which he employed his own Son in. How readily and cheerfully ought you to consecrate your selves and service to this work! you should come from your habitations and countries, as the *Levite from the place where he sojourned, with all the desires of your mindes to serve the Lord your God.*

as they help or help not the Church of God.

Job 29.

Obad. v. ult.

Deut. 18. 6.

And to you the rest, beside your Prayers, the exigence of the Church at this present time requires from you many other things. It may be some of you may be called, as souldiers, to spend your blood in the Churches Cause: If you knew the honour and the reward that belongs to such a service, you would say, as the Martyr once, Had every hair on your

2. To all others.

All are curſed or bleſſed

head a life, you would venture them all in the Churches Cauſe. It may be others of you may, with *Nehemiah*, be called from your own eaſe and honour, to ſome wearieſome task, embrace it readily. It is like your collections and contributions will be more frequent then ordinary, and very ſhortly in an extraordinary occaſion, for the relief of our diſtreſſed Brethren in *Ireland*: Many in the City of *London* have ſet excellent examples, let me provoke you by their pattern, as the Apoſtle *Paul* did the *Corinthians* to the like work, by propounding to them the example of *Macedonia*: Onely remember this, That what you give in this caſe, is interpreted by Chriſt as given to his own perſon; and whom would not this provoke? It is reported of Maſter *Fox*, that when a poor man asked ſomething of him for Chriſt Jeſus ſake, he queſtioned with the man, whether he knew Jeſus Chriſt; and finding ſignes that the man was a Beleever, he gave him his horſe, when he had no Money. I commend not his diſcretion, but his zeal and charity were admirable. Do ſomewhat proportionable to the diſtreſſe of your Brethren; Behold your Saviour coming naked, and hungry, and baniſhed in theſe his afflicted members. And in whatſoever elſe the Lord and his Church may have any need of you, remember that Gods bleſſing is upon them that come to help him: And that *Meroz*, and with *Meroz*, all others are curſed, who *come not out to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty*.

Matth. 25. 35.

FINIS.